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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

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WHEN I declared againſt medling with politics in theſe my lucubrations, I meant only that kind of politics, or art of government, which is ſo learnedly and logically reaſoned upon in all the coffee-houſes and barber's ſhops of this great metropolis; intending (as it is my province) to take cogniſance of any particular act of the legiſlature, that, contrary to its intention, has been prejudicial to the morals of my fellow citizens.

BUT it is the *repeal* of an act of parliament, and not the act itſelf, that I am now about to complain of. The act

act I mean is the WITCH ACT. I am not conſidering the repeal of this act as affecting our religious belief, according to the Scotch proverb, "Tauk awaw the deel, and good bwee to the Lord:" I think of it only in a moral light, as it has given ſuch encouragement to WITCHCRAFT in this kingdom, that one hardly meets with a grown perſon either in public or private, who is not more or leſs under its influence.

WHOEVER attends to the ſermon at church, or liſtens to the converſation of grave and good men, will hear and believe that the preſent age is the moſt fruitful in wickedneſs of any ſince the deluge. Whether theſe gentlemen have diſcovered the true reaſon of this depravity, or whether the diſcovery has been reſerved for me, I will not pretend to determine; but certain it is, that the repeal of an act of parliament, meant to reſtrain the power of the devil by inflicting death upon his agents, muſt infallibly give him a much greater influence over us, than he ever could have hoped for, during the continuance of ſuch an act.

I AM well aware that there are certain of my readers who have no belief in WITCHES; but I am willing to hope they are only thoſe, who either have not read, or elſe have forgot the proceedings againſt them, publiſhed at large in the ſtate trials: if there is any man alive who can deny his aſſent to the poſitive and circumſtantial evidence given againſt them in thoſe trials, I ſhall only ſay that I pity moſt ſincerely the hardneſs of his heart.

THAT the devil may truly be ſaid to be let looſe among us by the repeal of this act, will appear beyond contradiction, if we take a ſurvey of the general faſcination that all ranks and orders of mankind ſeem at preſent to be under.

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WHAT is it but WITCHCRAFT that occaſions that univerſal and uncontroulable rage of PLAY, by which the nobleman, the man of faſhion, the merchant and the tradeſman, with their wives, ſons and daughters, are running headlong to ruin? What is it but WITCHCRAFT that conjures up that ſpirit of pride and paſſion for expence, by which all claſſes of men, from his grace at Weſtminſter to the ſaleſman at Wapping, are entailing beggary upon their old age, and bequeathing their children to poverty and the pariſh? Again, is it poſſible to be accounted for, from any natural cauſe, that perſons of good ſenſe and ſober diſpoſitions ſhould take a freak four or five times in a winter of turning their houſes into inns; cramming every bedchamber, cloſet and corner with people whom they hardly know; ſtifling one another with heat; blocking up the ſtreets with chairs and coaches; offending themſelves, and pleaſing nobody; and all this for the vain boaſt of having drawn together a greater mob than my lady Somebody, or the honourable Mr. Such-a-one? That nothing but WITCHCRAFT can be the occaſion of ſo much folly and abſurdity, muſt be obvious to the common ſenſe of all mankind.

ANOTHER and more melancholy proof of the power of WITCHCRAFT, is, that a wife may be beautiful in her perſon, gentle in her manners, fond of her huſband, watchful for his quiet, careful of his intereſt, kind to his children, chearful to his friends, and obliging to all; yet be yoked to a wretch, ſo blind to his own happineſs, as to prefer to her endearments the hired embraces of a diſeaſed proſtitute, loathſome in her perſon, and a fury in her diſpoſition. If this is not WITCHCRAFT, I

ſhould

ſhould be glad to know of ſuch a huſband what name I may call it by. Among the lower kind of tradeſmen (for every dealer in broken glaſs bottles has his *fille de joie)* it is a common thing for a huſband to kick his wife out of doors in the morning, for his having ſubmitted over night to a good drubbing from his miſtreſs.

IT would be endleſs to take notice of every argument that ſuggeſts itſelf in proof of WITCHCRAFT; I ſhall content myſelf with only one more, which I take to be inconteſtible. This is the ſpirit of jacobitiſm, which is ſo well known to poſſeſs many of his Majeſty's proteſtant ſubjects in this kingdom. That a poor Highlander in Scotland may be a jacobite without WITCHCRAFT, I am ready to allow; zeal for a loſt cheeld of the gude houſe of Stewart may have eaten him up: but that an Engliſh country gentleman, who is really no papiſt in his heart, or that a wealthy citizen of London, who goes to church every ſunday, and joins in the prayers for the preſent royal family, ſhould be drinking daily to the *reſtoration* (as he calls it) of a popiſh bigot, who would burn him at Smithfield the next week for not going to maſs; and whoſe utmoſt merit is his precarious deſcent from a family, remarkable for little elſe than pedantry, obſtinacy, debauchery and enthuſiaſm; that ſuch a perſon ſhould be a jacobite, or in other words, an enemy to the beſt of Kings, and the wiſeſt of conſtitutions, cannot poſſibly be accounted for, but by the power of WITCHCRAFT.

FROM all theſe conſiderations it is much to be wiſhed that a new WITCH ACT may take place next ſeſſions of parliament. *Vox populi eſt vox Dei*, is a wiſe and a true ſaying; and that the *vox populi* is in favour of ſuch an

an act, let the late proceedings at Tring, and ſome ſimilar occurrences in other parts of England bear teſtimony.

THAT the legiſlature may be farther induced to take this matter into conſideration, I am clearly of opinion, that the paſſing ſuch an act will go a great way towards ſilencing the clamours which have gone forth ſo grievouſly againſt the jew bill: for it is ſhrewdly ſuſpected that the ſame people who imagined their religion to be at ſtake by the repeal of the one, are at preſent under the moſt terrible conſternation at the paſſing of the other: and beſides, it will be a convincing proof to all ſorts of perſons, that the adminiſtration is as well enclined to diſcourage the devil, as it is to favour the jews; a circumſtance which as matters ſtand at preſent, ſeems to want confirmation.

IN the mean time I entreat all my readers, as much as in them lies, to be upon their guard againſt WITCHES: for the better diſcovery of whom (as the law does not admit of the uſual trials by fire and water) I ſhall here ſet down all I know or have been told upon the ſubject. If a woman, turned of eighty, with grey hairs upon her chin, and a high-crowned hat on, ſhould be ſeen riding upon a broomſtick through the air, or ſailing in an egg-ſhell upon the Thames in a high wind, you may almoſt ſwear that ſhe is a WITCH. If as often as you ſee any particular old woman, you feel a pricking of pins all over you, or if your ſtomach be ſick, and ſhould happen to diſcharge a great quantity of the ſaid pins, or if while you are ſpeaking to this old woman, ſhe ſhould ſuddenly transform herſelf into a horſe without a head, or any ſuch uncommon animal, you may very fairly conclude that ſhe is no other than a WITCH. In ſuch caſes it will be a happy circumſtance if you are able to

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